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A PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS PLAN FOR SWISC

CORE PLAN AND PART I PROGRAM

LURA GROUP

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PREAMBLE

The following Core Plan and Part I Public Consultation Program has been developed as a discussion document. It is the result of consultations with SWISC, the Technical Committee and regional staff. Input from SWEAP's Multi-Stakeholder Committee has provided a valuable basis on which to develop the program.

During the months of October and November, discussions will be held with stakeholder groups regarding the overall SWISC program and the PCP component. At the end of this stage, the core plan will be reviewed and adjusted.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0	INTRODUCTION		1
2.0	PROGRAM GOAL AND OBJECTIVES		2
	2.1	Program Goal	2
	2.2	Program Objectives	2
3.0	THE CORE PLAN		4
	3.1	Stages of the Public Involvement Program	4
	3.2	Public Involvement	5
	3.2.1	Stakeholder Consultations	5
	3.2.2	Interested Individuals and Organizations	5
	3.2.3	General Public	6
	3.3	Communications Program	6
	3.4	Public Awareness and Education	7
4.0	Part 1: PUBLIC CONSULTATION PROGRAM		8
	4.1	Documentation	8
	4.2	Consultations with Key Stakeholders	8
	4.3	Public Information and Awareness	9
	4.3.1	Newsletters #1 and #2	10
	4.3.2	Advertising	10
	4.3.3	Display	10
	4.3.4	Video	11
	4.3.5	Information Service	11
	4.3.6	Open Houses	11
	4.3.7	Public and Student Education	12
	4.4	Public Consultation, Participation & Involvement	12
	4.4.1	Workshops	12
	4.4.2	Briefs and Submissions	13
	4.5	Assessment of Current Public Opinion	14
	4.6	Social Effects of Proposals	14
5.0	PUBLIC CONSULTATION PROGRAM -- EXPECTED RESULTS		15
ENDNOTES			16

1. INTRODUCTION

Since its inception in March, 1989, the Solid Waste Interim Steering Committee (SWISC) has, through its member regional councils, been receiving public input and comment on a variety of SWISC-related issues. These issues are documented in a report outlining key Issues and Concerns prepared by Senes Consultants Limited[1]. Public consultation, involvement and participation are essential components to the SWISC process -- since the Regional governments are undertaking a solid waste planning, Environmental Assessment and Approvals process which will affect the most densely populated region in Canada.

SWISC views the participation of the interested and potentially affected public as essential. In developing its formal program, the first task is to prepare a public consultation program which "ensure(s) that the public has an opportunity to contribute effectively to the development of a long-term solution to the GTA's (Greater Toronto Area) solid waste management challenge"[2]. This program must be developed based on mutually agreeable objectives - both for the immediate activities and activities over the long term. These objectives will be utilized as a means to evaluate the progress of the Public Consultation Program (PCP) throughout the SWISC waste management planning phase of the program. Beyond that, SWISC will develop a PCP when it embarks on Preparing for Environmental Assessment and approvals. Subsequently and upon implementation, an ongoing program to involve GTA and host communities will be prepared.

2. PROGRAM GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The program goal and objectives have been designed to achieve two purposes. First, they must provide a clear understanding of the purpose of the program and what it will achieve. This will provide a common basis from which participants in the process can work together. Secondly, they must meet the requirements of the Environmental Assessment Act and supporting policies.

2.1 Program Goal

The PCP program is based on the overall SWISC goal, since public consultation is a series of activities designed to achieve that goal. The overall SWISC goal is to:

> Through a collaborative approach, develop and implement a system for managing the solid wastes of the Greater Toronto Area, which is technically, environmentally, economically and socially sound.

Ensuring fair and equitable opportunity for public consultation throughout the development of SWISC's program will contribute to and enhance the collaborative approach. The decisions process will be improved through a thorough understanding of issues of concern to communities involved.

2.2 Program Objectives

For the public consultation program to contribute to the collaborative approach, a series of objectives has been established. Achievement of these objectives will aid SWISC in realizing its overall goal. Measures and activities required to achieve these objectives are set out in the public consultation plan and program in subsequent sections.

1. Develop a public involvement process which would obtain the input of interested citizens and stakeholders[3] into the SWISC program in an organized effort to identify and incorporate the value preferences of the various publics.

2. To communicate, to stakeholders, interest groups and the general public, the purpose and goals of the SWISC program.

3. Respond to citizen and stakeholder input in a manner which provides a traceable analysis of that input; addresses how that input has been incorporated; and identifies outstanding issues remaining to be resolved in later stages.

4. To prepare a framework for social impact assessment which will enable the evaluation of the types of effects a project may have on those potentially affected.

In order to achieve these objectives a clearly defined process must be established at the outset. As the program progresses, evaluations of its effectiveness will be necessary when defining the scope of activities in future stages.

In addition, the "Guidelines and Policy on Pre-submission Consultation in the EA Process" serve as an important set of principles.

The following Program has been established based on a Core Plan (essential elements for each major activity), followed by a detailed program for the first major activity. Subsequent stages 2 and 3 will be developed based on stakeholder and public input.

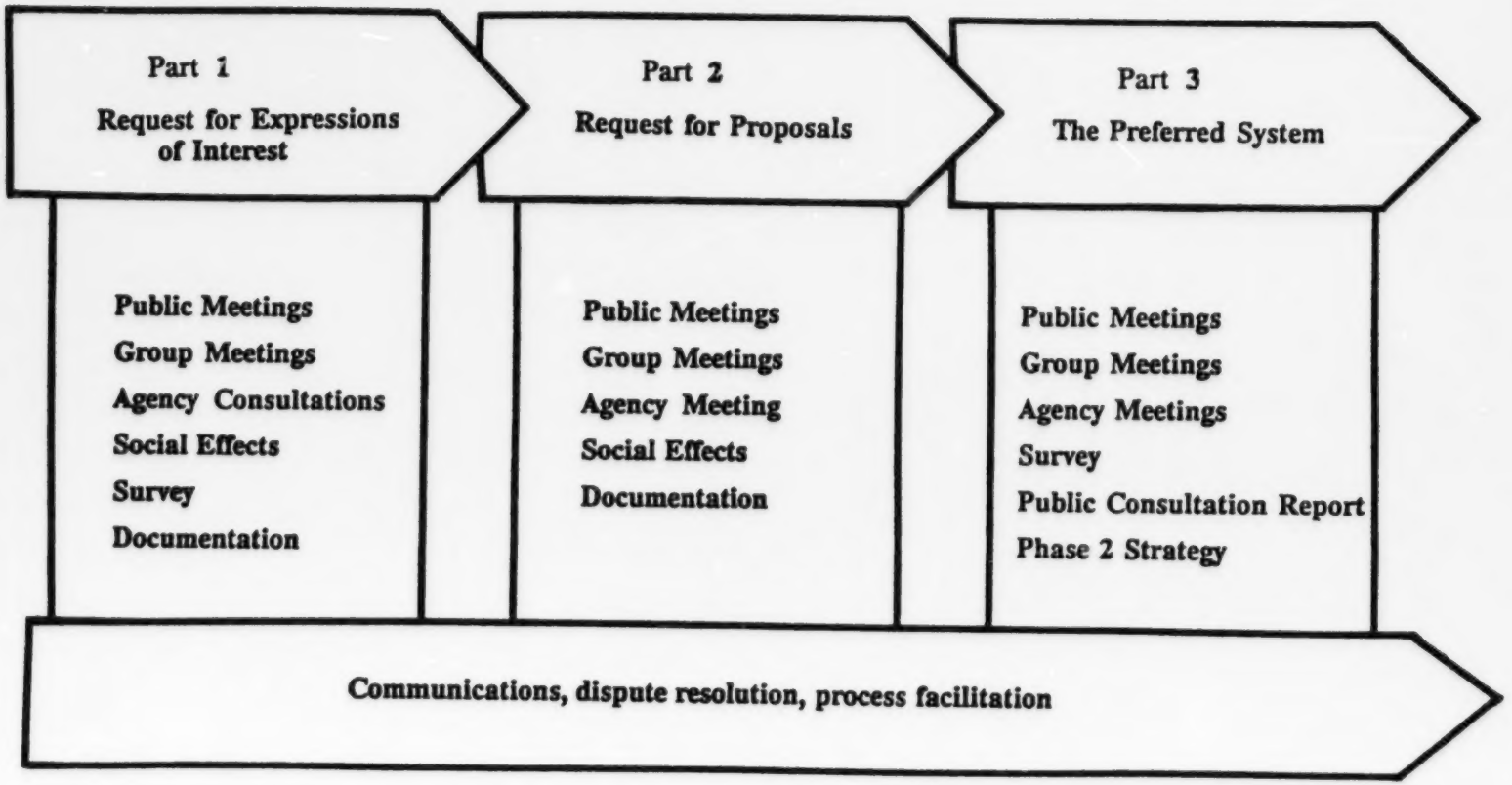

Figure 1. **Public consultation program for phase one of the GTA solid waste management system development.**

3.0 THE CORE PLAN

3.1 Stages of the Public Involvement Program

SWISC has defined its overall program into three distinct phases. The first phase (March '89 - July 1991) embodies the search for and selection of a waste management system to service the GTA's long-range needs. Phase 2 is the environmental assessment and approvals phase (1991-1994); and Phase 3 is System Implementation and operation (1994 and beyond).

As illustrated in the accompanying diagram, the Phase I Public consultation program will be implemented in three parts, corresponding to the SWISC work schedule as outlined in the August Status Report.

Part 1) Request for Expressions of Interest:

Before issuing a Request for Proposal, SWISC has called for Expressions of Interest (EOI). SWISC's key objective for the EOI stage is to identify a reasonable range of effective and innovative solutions and to simplify the more detailed Request for Proposal stage. The Evaluation Criteria contained in the Request for Expressions of Interest will be submitted for comment by the public, government agencies and the five Regional Councils. This input will be provided to respondents to the EOI for their information.

Part 2) Request for Proposals:

An analysis of the Expressions of Interest received will be carried out by the Technical Committee. A report on the analysis, and the draft Request for Proposals will then be submitted to the five Regional Councils, government agencies and the public for comment.

Part 3) Preferred System:

Once the input has been obtained, a final Request for Proposals will be issued.

Subsequently a full analysis of all the proposals received will be carried out by the Technical Committee. A report containing comments and recommendations on the "preferred system" will be submitted to SWISC and then passed on to Regional Councils, government agencies and the public for comment.

After input has been received from Regional Councils, the public and government agencies in Part 3, a final preferred system will be selected by SWISC. This will mark the end of Phase 1 of the GTA solid waste management system development.

A core public consultation plan has been developed which is the basis for each stage of the Phase I program. It comprises several concurrent elements the results of each will be incorporated into a stage report:

3.2 Public Involvement

The following public involvement elements will function concurrently and provide opportunity for all levels of interests to become involved.

3.2.1 Stakeholder Consultations

Throughout the planning period, communications will be developed and maintained with representatives of identified "sector" groups. Meetings, telephone conferences and the development of a joint committee are probable methods of ensuring that input is obtained. The plan is flexible in that it ensures that as additional organizations are identified, they will be briefed on progress to date and encouraged to become involved.

3.2.2 Interested Individuals and Organizations

Already mailing lists listing over 15,000 names, organizations and institutions are on record at the five participating regional offices. Subsequent to an analysis of the lists to ensure a broad representation of potential interests, communications will be developed through a

variety of media and opportunities provided to attend public meetings, workshops and other fora as the program progresses.

3.2.3 General Public

Opportunities for citizens to become informed of the purpose of SWISC, its goals and program will be made available through print advertising, cable TV and news releases/public service announcements. Citizens may express opinion either by writing to SWISC or attending at meetings.

In order to gauge public opinion at various steps along the way two methods of assessment will be employed. The first collection of data from existing information and the second, a customized survey to over 1000 GTA households.

Citizens and stakeholders will be provided an opportunity to participate at any level of activity -- depending on their level of interest, time commitments and other constraints.

3.3 Communications Program

In support of the public involvement plan, several communications tools will be required for each stage. These are:

- Newsletters
- News releases/bulletins/public service announcements
- Issue papers
- Display
- Video
- Print Advertising
- Information service

3.4 Public Awareness and Education

The public can participate in waste management directly through initiating waste recycling composting and reduction programs at home.

Recognition is given here to Metro Toronto's proposed mass publicity campaign. Mechanisms for SWISC to build on this program will be developed once Metro's campaign has been reviewed by SWISC participants.

4.0 PART I: PUBLIC CONSULTATION PROGRAM - October to December, 1989

Development of the PCP will provide SWISC and the public with three key opportunities:

Opportunity No. 1: Citizens and stakeholders will comment on the overall SWISC program utilizing the Status Report and the MacViro Report[4] as a basis for discussion.

Opportunity No. 2: SWISC requires public input on the suggested Evaluation Criteria contained in the "Requests for Expressions of Interest"[5].

Opportunity No. 3: SWISC is committed to keeping PCP participants informed of the way the comments and input have been addressed and incorporated into its program.

Built in to these opportunities is the premise that a solid and fair PCP can only be developed if participants are well informed, on a timely basis of the purpose and issues around the consultation opportunities.

The following program of work provides a timely consultation program.

4.1 Documentation

Public consultation on SWISC's Program has progressed in an informal way through regionally - sponsored meetings. A review of this input has been undertaken by Senes Consultants with key process recommendations being incorporated in the Status Report (August 1989), and the Requests for Expressions of Interest. A traceable analysis of this input and how it has been addressed will be contained in the PCP report at the end of Part I (December, 1989).

4.2 Consultations with Key Stakeholders

A variety of opportunities for stakeholder consultations will be provided in Part I

Stakeholder groups have been identified to include:

* Regional waste management advisory groups
* major public interest groups
* waste management industry and agency procurement officers
* labour unions
* regional and municipal politicians
* private sector proponents
* media
* regional staff
* government review agencies
* interested communities external to GTA
* private sector waste generators (4R Impact Groups)

Beginning in October, each stakeholder group will be contacted and offered the opportunities discussed on page 8.

The concept of a multi-stakeholder advisory committee will be explored, and if considered feasible by stakeholders and SWISC, this component will be built into Part 2.

4.3 Public Information and Awareness

While stakeholders are essentially very aware of the issues facing SWISC, the interested public-at-large must be provided with an opportunity to become informed and aware of the purpose and objectives of SWISC.

A variety of mechanisms will be employed to ensure that the public becomes aware of SWISC's program.

4.3.1 Newsletter #1 The purpose of the newsletter is to commence the public information program. This inaugural issue will be the first formal contact with the public by SWISC. The contents will be informational regarding the PCP and promote public involvement. As well, it will advertise the public meeting series and provide a response coupon to build a SWISC mailing list and service information requests. It will be mailed between October 6 and 13 to 15,000 names on the consolidated regional list.

Newsletter #2 A second newsletter will be issued in early December describing the results of the workshops (4.4.1), summarizing the input received and how it has been/will be utilized.

A key item in the second newsletter will be the approach proposed to assess social effects of proposed solutions. This will be available for review and comment. It will be mailed to recipients of newsletter #1 plus additional names who have requested it at meetings or as a result of advertisements.

4.3.2 Advertising: National and Regional newspapers will carry two consecutive messages.

Saturday October 7: 1/3 page ads in Toronto Star, Globe & Mail, Toronto Sun and Regional daily papers will outline the aims of SWISC and carry similar messages to the newsletter. A response coupon will be provided for readers who wish to keep informed or become involved.

Mid-end October: Editions of 10 regional newspapers will carry public meeting notices for two consecutive weeks.

4.3.3 Display - The Purpose and Aims of SWISC

An 6-panel SWISC display explaining its purpose and aims will be available for SWISC sponsored public meetings, open houses, community halls/libraries and high traffic areas.

4.3.4 Video - The Purpose and Aims of SWISC

A short video will be available for use in schools, public meetings, discussion groups and on loan to stakeholder groups. It will be produced in October and available at the SWISC public meeting series (October/November).

4.3.5 Information Service

(a) Issue Papers, Status Reports, Technical Papers

As members of the public become more informed, they may require detailed information on the current GTA solid waste problems, existing technologies, evaluation methods and other issues.

A series of issue papers will be prepared and mailed to citizens expressing an interest in participating in the process. On request, technical papers such as the REOI and MacViro report will be forwarded to individuals who require detailed background material.

(b) Workshop Background Package

Prior to each or workshop registered participants will receive background information to describe the purpose and content of the meeting.

4.3.6 Open Houses

Prior to formal public workshops, open houses will be held to ensure that citizens have the opportunity to meet SWISC personnel, ask questions and become informed. An "exit" form/survey will be completed by visitors in an attempt to gauge their opinion on the evaluation criteria. The video, display and issue papers will be available for review in an informal relaxing setting.

4.3.7 Public and Student Education

Through the distribution of public information materials citizens within the GTA will become aware of SWISC's purpose. This material can be used in schools during special purpose weeks such as Recycling Week. November 20 to 27. Requests from schools for information will be co-ordinated through SWEAP and other regional educational institutions. In addition, the SWISC program will utilize Recycling Week and other pertinent material during Part I.

4.4 Public Consultation, Participation and Involvement

When citizens become aware of the issues facing SWISC, they may wish to participate in the decision-making process by offering advice on a variety of key questions. These questions are:

- are the core evaluation criteria compatible with GTA citizens principles
- how best to choose systems and system components;
- what type of administrative framework (e.g. Board of management) would be the most effective implementation framework
- suggested methods for involving the GTA public in the future stages of the program.

4.4.1 Workshops

A series of public meetings will be held in each region to provide the opportunity for the questions to be considered, in addition to providing a forum for other issues citizens may wish to be addressed.

Suggestions for agendas and format are being obtained from local advisory groups and regional staff as follows:

Halton Region: Citizens Information Group is advising on format, content and locations for two public meetings/workshops.

Peel Region: Public Participation personnel are advising on the best locations for public meetings.

York Region: While there is no community waste management advisory committee in this region, contacts will be developed through existing environmental and business networks to establish a mailing list. Regional staff are assisting with meeting locations.

Durham Region: The public liaison committee to the regional WMMP is being requested to advise program staff of the most effective outreach methods.

Metro Toronto - SWEAP/MSC: The Chairperson of each MSC Advisory caucus has agreed to provide SWISC with input on format, timing content and location for two public meetings/workshops.

Suggested dates for the first public meetings are between October 23 and November 7.

Results from these meetings will be incorporated into an Addenda, which will be forwarded to registered respondents who intend to or are considering responding to the REOI. This Addenda will be prepared in mid-November.

4.4.2 Briefs and Submissions

Citizens who are unable to actively participate in the workshop sessions, but wish to express their opinions may do so in writing by November 5 to SWISC. All briefs received which address the key questions or other items of interest to them (which are relevant to this

stage of the SWISC program) will be incorporated in the Addenda.

4.5 Assessment of Current Public Opinion

During the public consultation program for Part I, an additional activity will be undertaken, with a report prepared by November 5. This activity will summarize key issues identified through survey data obtained by Environics Research Group. This report will provide additional background for SWISC and EOI respondents, as well as to interested citizens. It will be published as part of the technical papers series and available upon request.

4.6 Social Effects of Proposals

During Part I, and based upon input received in the consultation process, a social effects matrix will be prepared for use by the Technical Committee to SWISC when evaluating Expressions of Interest.

This matrix will be available for review and comment prior to its application. It will be published in the second newsletter scheduled for circulation in early December.

5.0 PUBLIC CONSULTATION PROGRAM -- EXPECTED RESULTS

As a result of intensive communications and consultation activities during Part I, the following results should be achieved:

- a greater understanding of SWISC's purpose and aims amongst stakeholders and the interested public
- the preparation of an Addenda regarding public input to SWISC's core evaluation criteria
- preparation of SWISC Part 2 public consultation program
- the establishment of a sound communications network for SWISC which will enable active and informed participation in future stages.
- documentation and response to all input received and activities held in Part I

SWISC's public consultation program provides an opportunity to all interested citizens to become actively involved in the process. An improved planning process will be the result. Citizens who agree to dedicate their time and energies to GTA's waste management program will contribute valuable insights to the decision-makers as they proceed to resolve the area's waste management challenges for the future.

ENDNOTES

1. Key Issues and Concerns from Regions and Public following release of a "Proposal from the Five Regional Chairmen in the Greater Toronto Area regarding a long-term plan for the management of Solid Waste - March, 1989. Draft Senes Consultants Ltd.

2. Status Report to Member Councils on the long-term Plan for the management of Solid Waste in the Greater Toronto Area". August 1989. Solid Waste Interim Steering Committee. p. 12.

3. An individual, group or institution with an interest or concern, either economic, societal, technical or environmental, that is affected by the generation and management of solid wastes, or by measures or programs proposed to respond to the solid waste issues by SWISC.

4. "Consolidation of Existing Solid Waste Management Plans in the Greater Toronto Area" MacViro Consultants Inc. August, 1989.

5. "Request for Expressions of Interest for the Development and Operation of a Comprehensive Long-Term Solid Waste Management System for the Greater Toronto Area". SWISC October, 1989.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

SWISC PROCESS - PART I 1989